



Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW)

VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011

What is VOW?

The VOW to Hire Heroes Act is bipartisan, bicameral, comprehensive legislation that would lower the rate of unemployment among our nation's Veterans. This bill addresses the high rate of Veterans' unemployment by:

- **Expanding Education & Training**
 - Providing nearly 100,000 unemployed Veterans of past eras and wars with up to one (1) year of additional Montgomery GI Bill benefits to qualify for jobs in high-demand sectors, including anything from trucking to technology
 - Providing disabled Veterans who have exhausted their unemployment benefits up to one (1) year of additional VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment benefits
- **Improving the Transition Assistance Program (TAP)**
 - Making TAP mandatory for most service members transitioning to civilian status
 - Upgrading career counseling options and job-hunting skills
 - Ensuring the program is tailored to individuals in the twenty-first century job market
- **Facilitating Seamless Transition**
 - Allowing service members to begin the federal employment process by acquiring Veterans preference status prior to separation
- **Translating Military Skills and Training**
 - Requiring the Department of Labor to take a hard look at how to translate military skills and training to civilian sector jobs
 - Easing the licensing and certification process for our Veterans
- **Veterans Tax Credits:**
 - Providing tax credits for hiring Veterans and disabled Veterans who are out of work

What is the Transition Assistance Program (TAP)?

- The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) was established to meet the needs of separating service members during their transition into civilian life by offering job-search assistance and related services.
- TAP helps service members and their spouses make the initial transition from military service to the civilian workplace with less difficulty and at less overall cost to the government.
- TAP provides employment and training information to armed forces members within 180 days of separation or retirement by providing comprehensive three-day workshops at selected military installations nationwide.
- Workshop attendees learn about job searches, career decision-making, current occupational and labor market conditions, and resume and cover letter preparation and interviewing techniques.

What is the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program?

The Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) is a key initiative within the VOW to Hire Heroes Act. This effort is currently underway by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Labor (DoL) to work toward its goals. Specifically, VRAP will offer 12 months of training assistance for Veterans hardest hit by current economic conditions. Participants must be enrolled in a VA-approved education program offered by a community college or technical school. The program must lead to an Associate Degree, Non-College Degree or a Certification, and must train the Veteran for a high-demand occupation.

VA and DoL are working together to roll out this new program on July 1, 2012. To qualify, a Veteran must:

- Be at least 35 but no more than 60 years old
- Be unemployed (as determined by DoL) with special consideration given to Veterans who have been unemployed for more than 26 weeks
- Have an other-than-dishonorable discharge
- Not be eligible for any other VA education benefit program (e.g., the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Assistance)
- Not be in receipt of VA compensation due to unemployability
- Not be enrolled in a federal or state job-training program

The program is limited to 45,000 participants during fiscal year 2012 and to 54,000 participants from October 1, 2012, through March 31, 2014. Participants may receive up to 12 months of assistance at the full-time payment rate under the Montgomery GI Bill—Active Duty program (currently \$1,473 per month). Applications will be submitted through DoL and benefits paid by VA. DoL will provide employment assistance to every Veteran who participates upon completion of the program.

Sources

<http://veterans.house.gov/vow>

<http://www.taonline.com/TapOffice>

http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/other_programs/vow.html

<http://veterans.house.gov/sites/republicansdocuments/2011-11-08TesterVeterans.pdf>